(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) No proposal is under consideration of the Government to set up Special Courts for FERA cases.

Seizures of Goods

1698. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of goods like gold, silver, narcotics, electronic items, clothes, foreign exchange etc. siezed at national/international airports and other parts of the country during each of the last three years and current year State-wise;

(b) the reasons for increase in the smuggling of the said items; and

(c) the remedial steps taken or likely to be taken by the Government to check such activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Seizure of Brown Sugar

1699. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether 7 kgs brown sugar worth seven crores of rupees has been seized on Indore-Bhopal route;

(b) if so, whether the Government have ordered any probe in this matter;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against the culprits; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir. 7.070 kgs. of brown sugar (heroin) was reported to have been seized by P. Station Khajuri Sadak, Distt. Bhopal on 20.2.97 However no precise valuation of narcotic drug which are often of indeterminate strength and compositlon and are liable for destruction can be made.

(b) Yes, Sir. The follow up investigations were intiated by MP Police immediately.

(c) The three accused were arrested. Investigations are in progress. Crime No. 2497, U/s 8/18/21 of NDPS Act, 1985 has been registered against them.

(d) Government of India is fully aware of the problem of narcotics trafficking and have taken several steps in this regard which include re-activisation of enforcement agencies throughout the country, training of the officers, holding of regular Coordination Meeting, development of bilateral agreement with several countries and holding of talks with Pakistan and Myanmar.

[English]

Funding of Infrastructure Projects

1700. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether In a bid to overcome the bottleneck in funding the infrastructure projects a meeting was held in Delhi between Secretaries of power, Telecom, Surface Transport and chiefs of IDBI, IFCI and Chairman of various nationalised banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the main decisions arrived at the meeting;

(c) whether the Government propose to set up an inter-institutional Group under the aegis of IDBI in this respect;

(d) if so, the composition and the main terms and conditions of the Group;

(e) whether this Group is also likely to suggest ways and means for infrastructure in the state sector also;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the extent to which this board is likely to be helpful in funding the infrastructure projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (g) In a meeting held on July 15, 1997 at New Delhi on infrastructure financing wherein representatives of various Ministries, major financial institutions and selected public sector banks participated, it was decided to nominate Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) as the nodal agency for coordinating among institu-tions by forming an Inter Institutional Group (IIG) which will study the issues connected with financing of infrastructure projects. The IIG has constituted four sub groups to study financing issues relating to four sectors viz. power, telecom, ports and roads. These sub groups would also interact with concerned Ministries/Departments. The IIG will study various issues such as financial constraints, funding pattern, risk mitigation, bankability of projects etc. It is not proposed to have State by State Plans but infrastructure sector would be looked at for the country as a whole.

[Translation]

Appellate Tribunals for Customs/Excise

1701. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up an appellate tribunal to solve the cases related to customs duty and central excise duty;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which this tribunal is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal (CEGAT) is already an existing Tribunal constituted under the Finance Act, 1980 for hearing appeals against the orders of Commissioner (Appeals) in Customs/Excise matters. Proposals for constitution of a National Tribunal for Customs and Excise, in the light of the recommendations of the Law Commission in its 115th Report, can be considered only after an indepth study of the existing Tribunals is made by the Law Commission, in the light of the observations made by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Shri L. Chandra Kumar Vs Union of India (CA 481/89).

[English]

Judicial Action Against Companies

1702. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the departmental and judicial action is being taken against some companies for the evasion of excise and customs duties involving an amount of more than one million thousand of rupees;

(b) if so, the details of such companies, State-wise and particularly in Uttar Pradesh;

(c) the companies against whom such cases are pending for more than three years in Central Excise Gold Control Appellate Tribunal, High Courts and Supreme Court, as on date; and

(d) the effective steps being taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for immediate recovery of amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Forged Drafts of Foreigners

1703. LT. GENL. PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI :

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :

SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH :

Willl the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated June 23, 1997 captioned "Lakhs withdrawn through forged drafts";

(b) the facts of the matter reported thereon;

(c) the *modus operandi* of the withdrawal through forged drafts;

(d) the reasons for which the banks concerned in India could not detect the criminal conspiracy by some foreigners at the time of encashment of these forged drafts; and

(e) the effective measures being taken by the Reserve Bank of India to prevent such heavy amounts being withdrawn through forged drafts by unscrupulous persons and plugging the lacunae in the existing procedure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Diversion of Funds

1704. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Union Government has been drawn to the alleged diversion of Central Government funds for development schemes in West Bengal to unauthorised Personal Ledger Accounts (PLAs) for the last five/six years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government have enquired into the matter;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the measures/action taken or proposed to be taken to check recurrence of such cases in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Some complaints have been received in regard to financial irregularities in the State of West Bengal including that of alleged diversion of Central Government funds for development schemes in West Bengal to unauthorised Personal Ledger Accounts (PLA's).

Audit Report of Union Government for the period ending 31st March, 1996 on performance Reviews on selected centrally sponsored schemes which was presented in Parliament on 8th may, 1997 incorporates some points relating to procedural irregularities including diversion of Central funds and its deposit in non interest bearing Personal Ledger Account, misutilisation and non utilisation of funds, ineffective monitoring and evaluation etc. in respect of a number of States including West Bengal.